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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

INFLATABLE BALANCING GAME

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## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### 1. Field of the Invention

The subject matter disclosed generally relates to an inflatable, fully collapsible toy set.

### 2. Background Information.

There have developed various interactive toy game sets. For example, there are various types of board games with spinners, dice, etc. Board games do not typically require a great amount of physical dexterity or interaction. Games that do require physical interaction typically include large plastic housings and pieces. Large plastic housings make such a commercial product expensive to produce, heavy to ship and bulky to display. Additionally, the end user must provide sufficient shelf space to store the game.

There have been developed games that have inflatable housings. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,632,490 issued to Brown discloses a game that includes a distributor pipe assembly that can randomly distribute balls placed into the top opening of the pipe. The base portion of the pipe can be inflated and then deflated to reduce the storage height

of the game. Unfortunately, the pipe is not deflatable so that game still requires considerable storage space.

U.S. Patent No. 5,772,535 issued to Murphy discloses inflatable games that each contain nozzles to create a flow of air across the surface of the game. Such a game requires a continuously running pump. It would be desirable to provide an interactive game set that minimizes shelf space when the game is not being used and does not require a continuously running pump.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A toy game set that includes an inflatable, fully collapsible sealed housing and a plurality of game pieces. A player can manipulate the game pieces to interact with the inflatable housing in a game of win or lose.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is an illustration of an embodiment of a toy game set;

Figure 2 is an illustration of an inflatable housing in a fully collapsed position;

Figure 3 is an illustration of another embodiment of a toy game set;

Figure 4 is an illustration of another embodiment of a toy game set;

Figure 5 is an illustration of another embodiment of a toy game set.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Disclosed is a toy game set that includes an inflatable, fully collapsible sealed housing. The game set also contains a plurality of game pieces that can be thrown into, pulled out of, etc. the inflated housing in a game where a player can win or lose. The housing is inflated to a sufficient size so that the players can physically interact with the game set. The fully collapsible feature of the housing minimizes the storage space required to store the game set.

Referring to the drawings more particularly by reference numbers, Figure 1 shows an embodiment of a toy game set 10. The game set 10 includes a sealed inflatable tree shaped housing 12. The housing 12 can be inflated through a stem 14. The stem 14 can be sealed so that the housing does not deflate or require a continuous pump in the inflated position. The housing 12 is constructed from a flexible material such as rubber or plastic that can be fully deflated to a flat position as shown in Figure 2.

Referring again to Fig. 1, the game set 10 may include a plurality of game pieces 16 and a spinner 18. The game

pieces 16 may be plastic shaped monkeys with arms 20 that can interlock. The monkeys 16 may have two different sizes. The monkeys 16 can be hung from tree "branches" 22 by inserting the arm 20 of one monkey 16 into an aperture 24 of the branch 22. Each tree branch 22 may have a different color. The spinner 18 may be divided into different segments 26 each having a color that corresponds to a color of a branch. Each segment may also include numerical indicia and an indication of which size monkey 16 should be placed onto the tree. The deflated housing 12 and game pieces 16 and 18 may be stored in a box 28. The box 28 may have a thickness no greater than 4 inches.

To play the game each player takes a turn spinning the spinner 16. The spinner 16 provides an indication of how many monkeys 16, and the size of the monkeys 16, are to be placed onto, or removed from, a specific branch. For example the dial of the spinner 16 may "land" on a green segment that contains the number 2. The player then places 2 monkeys onto the green branch of the tree. The spinner 16 may land on a red remove segment that has the number 3. The player then removes 3 monkeys from a red branch. This

process continues until the tree becomes unbalanced and tips over. The player that places a monkey(s) that tips over the tree loses the game.

Figure 3 shows another embodiment of a toy game set 50. The game set 50 includes an inflatable, fully collapsible sealed bowl shaped housing 52. The game set 50 also contains a plurality of balls 54 that can be placed onto trays 56. Each player may use a scoop 58 to remove a number of balls 54 from the housing 52. Each ball 54 may have a letter indicia. The game set 50 may further include a plurality of game disks 60 that each have a word.

The game is played by having each player select a game disk 60 and display the word on the disk 60. The disk 60 may be placed in a disk holder 62. Each player takes a turn removing a ball(s) 54 from the housing 52 with their scoop 58 and then places the ball(s) into the tray 56. This process continues until one of the players spells the word displayed by the disk 60 with the letters of the balls 54 they have removed from the bowl 52. The deflated housing 52 and game pieces 54, 56, 58, 60 and 62 may be

stored in a box 64. The box 64 may have a thickness no greater than 5 inches.

Figure 4 shows another embodiment of the toy game set 100. The game set 100 includes an inflatable, fully collapsible sealed gumball machined shaped housing 102. The housing 102 includes an inner chamber 104 that has a plurality of balls 106. One or more of the balls 106 may be a penalty ball. For example, a black ball may be a penalty ball.

The housing 102 has a top opening 108 that allows the players to load the balls 106 into the inner chamber 104 and a bottom opening (not shown) that allows the balls 106 to fall out of the chamber 104 into a lower chamber 110. The balls 104 are held within the inner chamber 104 by a plurality of sticks 112. The sticks 112 can be pushed into and pulled out of corresponding apertures 114 in the housing 102. Each player is provided with a bucket 116. The deflated housing 102 and game pieces 106, 112 and 116 may be stored in a box 118. The box 118 may have a thickness no greater than 5 inches.

To play the game the players take turns placing their bucket 116 into the lower chamber 110. The player then pulls out a stick 112 to release one or more balls into the bucket 116. The release of a penalty ball requires that the player dump their balls from the bucket 116 back into the inner chamber 104. The first player with a full bucket, or the player with the most balls, wins the game.

Figure 5 shows another embodiment of a toy game set 150. The game set includes an inflatable, fully collapsible sealed pig shaped housing 152. The game set also includes a plurality of food shaped game pieces 154. The game pieces 154 can be bounced into an mouth opening 156 of the housing 152 with a bouncer 158. The game set 150 may further include a simulated "mud pit" 160, a plurality of locators 162 and a spinner 164. Each locator 162 may have a numerical indicia. The spinner 164 may also have numerical indicia.

To play the game the locators 162 are placed about the pig mouth 156. Each player is also allocated a number of food game pieces 154. A player spins the spinner 164 wherein the dial lands on a number. The player moves the

bouncer 158 to the locator 162 that has the corresponding number. The player then bounces a food item toward the pig mouth 156. If the food item lands in the mud pit 160, the player must put all of the food items that is in the pig into their pile. The first player to bounce all of their food items into the pig mouth 156 wins the game. The deflated housing 152 and game pieces 154, 158, 160, 162 and 164 may be stored in a box 166. The box 166 may have a thickness no greater than 5 inches.

While certain exemplary embodiments have been described and shown in the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that such embodiments are merely illustrative of and not restrictive on the broad invention, and that this invention not be limited to the specific constructions and arrangements shown and described, since various other modifications may occur to those ordinarily skilled in the art.